

LAHIRI'S SELECT POEMS

*Revised Edition*


080C.U.  
350/2B

UNIVERSITY OF CALCUTTA

1943

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## PREFACE

" Lahiri's Select Poems " was originally compiled by three Head Masters in collaboration. Prompted by a desire to keep alive the memory of his parents, the late Mr. S. K. Lahiri made a gift of the copyright of the book to the University, on condition that out of its sale proceeds a gold medal might be awarded every year to the best scholar in Moral Philosophy at the B.A. Examination in memory of his father the late Babu Ramtanu Lahiri. Subsequently in 1911, the Syndicate resolved that out of the sale proceeds of the book two gold medals (Ramtanu Lahiri and Gangamani Debi Gold Medals) should be annually awarded to the best graduates (one male and one female) in Mental and Moral Philosophy at the B.A. Examination, in memory of the late Babu Ramtanu Lahiri and his wife Sreemati Gangamani Debi respectively. In 1914, the Syndicate, at the suggestion of the donor and with the sanction of the Senate, founded a Research Fellowship in Bengali Language and Literature, to be maintained out of the sale proceeds of the above-mentioned book, supplemented by grants from the Fee fund of the University. The Fellowship (raised to a Professorship in 1930) was named after the late Babu Ramtanu Lahiri, the father of the donor.



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# LAHIRI'S SELECT POEMS

## 1

### THE HAPPY LIFE

How happy is he born and taught  
That serveth not another's will;  
Whose armour is his honest thought,  
And simple truth his utmost skill!

Whose passions not his masters are,  
Whose soul is still prepared for death,  
Not tied unto the world with care  
Of public fame or private breath;

Who envies none that chance doth raise  
Nor vice; who never understood  
How deepest wounds are given by praise;  
Nor rules of state, but rules of good;

Who hath his life from rumours freed;  
Whose conscience is his strong retreat;  
Whose state can neither flatterers feed,  
Nor ruin make accusers great;

Who God doth late and early pray  
More of his grace than gifts to lend;  
And entertains the harmless day  
With a well-chosen book or friend;



—This man is freed from servile bands  
 Of hope to rise, or fear to fall;  
 Lord of himself, though not of lands,  
 And having nothing, yet hath all.

---

## 2

## TO DAFFODILS

FAIR daffodils, we weep to see  
 You haste away so soon;  
 As yet the early-rising sun  
 Has not attain'd his noon.

Stay, stay  
 Until the hasting day  
 Has run  
 But to the evensong;  
 And, having pray'd together, we  
 Will go with you along.

We have short time to stay, as you,  
 We have as short a spring;  
 As quick a growth to meet decay,  
 As you, or anything.  
 We die  
 As your hours do, and dry  
 Away  
 Like to the summer's rain;  
 Or as the pearls of morning's dew,  
 Ne'er to be found again.

---

## THE GIFTS OF GOD

WHEN God at first made Man,  
 Having a glass of blessings standing by,  
 Let us (said He) pour on him all we can:  
 Let the world's riches, which dispersed lie,  
 Contract into a span.

So strength first made a way;  
 Then beauty flow'd, then wisdom, honour, pleasure;  
 When almost all was out, God made a stay,  
 Perceiving that, alone of all His treasure,  
 Rest in the bottom lay.

For if I should (said He)  
 Bestow this jewel also on My creature,  
 He would adore My gifts instead of Me,  
 And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature:  
 So both should losers be.

Yet let him keep the rest,  
 But keep them with repining restlessness:  
 Let him be rich and weary, that at least,  
 If goodness lead him not, yet weariness  
 May toss him to My breast.

## DEATH THE LEVELLER

THE glories of our blood and state  
 Are shadows, not substantial things;  
 There is no armour against fate;  
 Death lays his icy hand on kings:



Sceptre and crown  
 Must tumble down,  
 And in the dust be equal made  
 With the poor crooked scythe and spade

Some men with swords may reap the field  
 And plant fresh laurels where they kill  
 But their strong nerves at last must yield  
 They tame but one another still  
 Early or late  
 They stoop to fate,  
 And must give up their murmuring breath  
 When they, pale captives, creep to death

The garlands wither on your brow,  
 Then boast no more your mighty deeds  
 Upon Death's purple altar now  
 See where the victor-victim bleeds  
 Your heads must come  
 To the cold tomb;  
 Only the actions of the just  
 Smell sweet, and blossom in their dust

---

## 5

## THE POPLAR FIELD

The poplars are felled, farewell to the shade,  
 And the whispering sound of the cool colonnade!  
 The winds play no longer and sing in the leaves,  
 Nor Ouse on his bosom their image receives.

Twelve years have elaps'd since I first took a view  
 Of my favourite field and the bank where they grew,  
 And now in the grass behold they are laid,  
 And the tree is my seat that once lent me a shade.

The blackbird has fled to another retreat,  
Where the hazels afford him a screen from the heat,  
And the scene where his melody charm'd me before  
Resounds with his sweet flowing ditty no more

My fugitive years are all hasting away,  
And I must ere long lie as lowly as they,  
With a turf on my breast, and a stone at my head,  
Ere another such grove shall arise in its stead

Is a sight to engage me, if anything can,  
To rise on the perishing pleasures of man,  
Though his life be a dream, his enjoyments, I see  
Have a being less durable even than he

---

## LAUGHING SONG

When the green woods laugh with the voice of joy,  
And the dimpling stream runs laughing by,  
When the air does laugh with our merry wit,  
And the green hill laughs with the noise of it,

When the meadows laugh with lively green,  
And the grasshopper laughs in the merry scene,  
When Mary and Susan and Emily  
With their sweet round mouths sing "Ha, Ha, He!"

When the painted birds laugh in the shade,  
Where our table with cherries and nuts is spread  
Come live, and be merry, and join with me,  
To sing the sweet chorus of "Ha, Ha, He!"

---



## LUCY

## I

STRANGE fits of passion have I known.  
And I will dare to tell,  
But in the lover's ear alone.  
What once to me befell

When she I loved look'd every day  
Fresh as a rose in June,  
I to her cottage bent my way,  
Beneath an evening moon

Upon the moon I fix'd my eye,  
All over the wide sea;  
With quickening pace my horse drew nigh  
Those paths so dear to me

And now we reach'd the orchard plot;  
And, as we climb'd the hill,  
The sinking moon to Lucy's cot  
Came near and nearer still

In one of those sweet dreams I slept.  
Kind Nature's gentlest boon!  
And all the while my eyes I kept  
On the descending moon.

My horse moved on, hoof after hoof  
He raised, and never stopp'd.  
When down behind the cottage roof,  
At once, the bright moon dropp'd

What fond and wayward thoughts will slide  
Into a lover's head !  
' O mercy ! to myself I cried,  
' If Lucy should be dead ! '

## II

SHE dwelt among the untrodden ways  
Beside the springs of Dove,  
A Maid whom there were none to praise  
And very few to love :

A violet by a mossy stone  
Half hidden from the eye !  
Fair as a star, when only one  
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know  
When Lucy ceased to be ;  
But she is in her grave, and oh,  
The difference to me !

## III

I TRAVELL'D among unknown men,  
In lands beyond the sea ;  
Nor, England ! did I know till then  
What love I bore to thee.

'Tis past, that melancholy dream !  
Nor will I quit thy shore  
A second time, for still I seem  
To love thee more and more.

Among thy mountains did I feel  
The joy of my desire ;  
And she I cherish'd turn'd her wheel  
Beside an English fire.



Thy mornings show'd, thy nights conceal'd,  
 The bowers where Lucy play'd,  
 And thine too is the last green field  
 That Lucy's eyes survey'd

## IV

THREE years she grew in sun and shower,  
 Then Nature said—A lovelier flower  
 On earth was never sown;  
 This child I to myself will take,  
 She shall be mine, and I will make  
 A lady of my own.

Myself will to my darling be  
 Both law and impulse—and with me  
 The girl, in rock and plain  
 In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,  
 Shall feel an overseeing power  
 To kindle or restrain.

' She shall be sportive as the fawn  
 That wild with glee across the lawn  
 Or up the mountain springs,  
 And here shall be the breathing balm,  
 And here the silence and the calm  
 Of mute insensate things

The floating clouds their state shall lend  
 To her; for her the willow bend;  
 Nor shall she fail to see  
 Even in the motions of the storm  
 Grace that shall mould the maiden's form  
 By silent sympathy.

The stars of midnight shall be dear  
To her, and she shall lean her ear  
In many a secret place  
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,  
And beauty born of murmuring sound  
Shall pass into her face.

And vital feelings of delight  
Shall rear her form to stately height,  
Her virgin bosom swell;  
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give  
While she and I together live  
Here in this happy dell."

Thus Nature spake -- The work was done --  
How soon my Lucy's race was run!  
She died, and left to me  
This heath, this calm and quiet scene,  
The memory of what has been,  
And never more will be

## V

A slumber did my spirit seal,  
I had no human fears:  
She seemed a thing that could not feel  
The touch of earthly years

No motion has she now, no force,  
She neither hears nor sees;  
Roll'd round in earth's diurnal course,  
With rocks, and stones, and trees

---



## HOHENLINDEN

On Landen, when the sun was low,  
All bloodless lay the untrodden snow  
And dark as winter was the flow  
Of Iser, rolling rapidly

But Landen saw another sight,  
When the drum beat at dead of night,  
Commanding fires of death to light  
The darkness of her scenery

By torch and trumpet fast array'd,  
Each horseman drew his battle-blade,  
And furious every charger neigh'd,  
To join the dreadful revelry

Then shook the hills with thunder riven,  
Then rush'd the steed to battle driven,  
And louder than the bolts of heaven  
Far flash'd the red artillery

But redder yet that light shall glow  
On Landen's hills of stained snow,  
And broader yet the torrent flow  
Of Iser, rolling rapidly.

'Tis morn, but scarce yon level sun  
Can pierce the war clouds' rolling dun,  
Where furious Frank and fiery Hun  
Shout in their sulph'rous canopy

The combat deepens On, ye brave  
Who rush to glory or the grave!  
Wave, Munch! all thy banners wave,  
And charge with all thy chivalry!

Few, few, shall part where many meet!  
The snow shall be their winding-sheet;  
And every turf beneath their feet  
Shall be a soldier's sepulchre

9

## AUTUMN

## A DIRGE

The warm sun is failing, the bleak wind is wailing,  
The bare boughs are singing, the pale flowers are dying  
And the year  
On the earth her death-bed, in a shroud of leaves  
dead,  
Is living.

Come, months come away,  
From November to May,  
In your saddest array;  
Follow the bier  
Of the dead cold year,  
And like dim shadows watch by her sepulchre

The chill rain is falling, the nipt worm is crawling,  
The rivers are swelling, the thunder is knelling  
For the year;  
The blithe swallows are flown, and the lizards  
each gone  
To his dwelling;

Come months come away;  
 Put on white black and grey,  
 Let your light sisters play—  
 Ye, follow the bier  
 Of the dead cold year,  
 And make her grave green with tear on tear

---

## 10

## FAERY SONG

Shed no tear—oh shed no tear!  
 The flower will bloom another year  
 Weep no more—oh weep no more!  
 Young birds sleep in the nest a white core  
 Dry your eyes—oh dry your eyes,  
 For I was taught in Paradise  
 To use my breast of melodies  
 \* Shed no tear

•Overhead—look overhead  
 Along the blossoms white and red—  
 Look up, look up—I flutter now  
 On this flush permeate bough  
 See me—tis this silvery bird  
 Ever curra the good man's ill

Shed no tear—oh shed no tear!  
 The flower will bloom another year  
 Adieu, Adieu! I fly, adieu!  
 I vanish in the heaven's blue—  
 Adieu, Adieu!

---



# DREAM-PEDLARY

If there were dreams to sell,  
 What would you buy?  
 Some cost a passing bell,  
 Some a light sigh,  
 That shakes from Life's fresh crown  
 Only a rose-leaf down.  
 If there were dreams to sell  
 Merry and sad to tell,  
 And the crier rang the bell,  
 What would you buy?

A cottage lone and still,  
 With bowers nigh,  
 Shadowy, my woes to still,  
 Until I die.  
 Such pearl from Life's fresh crown  
 Fain would I shake me down  
 Were dreams to have at will,  
 This would best heal my ill  
 This would I buy.

# " HOME THEY BROUGHT HER WARRIOR DEAD "

Home they brought her warrior dead  
 She nor swoon'd, nor utter'd cry  
 All her maidens, watching, said,  
 She must weep or she will die

Then they praised him, soft and low,  
 Call'd him worthy to be loved,  
 Truest friend and noblest foe,  
 Yet she neither spoke nor moved

Stole a maiden from her place,  
 Lightly to the warrior stept,  
 Tock the face-cloth from the face;  
 Yet she neither moved nor wept

Rose a nurse of ninety years,  
 Set his child upon her knee—  
 Like summer tempest came her tears—  
 Sweet my child, I live for thee

## 13

"WILL YOU WALK A LITTLE FASTER?"

"WILL you walk a little faster?" said a whiting to  
 a snail,  
 "There's a porpoise close behind us, and he's tread-  
 ing on my tail.  
 See how eagerly the lobsters, and the turtles all  
 advance!  
 They are waiting on the shingle—will you come and  
 join the dance?  
 Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, will you  
 join the dance?  
 Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, won't you  
 join the dance?"

You can really have no notion how delightful it  
will be,  
When they take us up and throw us, with the lobsters,  
out to sea!"  
But the snail replied, Too far, too far!" and gave  
a look askance—  
Said he thanked the whiting kindly, but he would  
not join the dance.  
Would not, could not would not, could not, would  
not join the dance.  
Would not, could not, would not, could not, would  
not join the dance.

What matters it how far we go? ' his sealy friend  
replied.  
'There is another shore, you know upon the other  
side,  
The further off from England the nearer is to France—  
Then turn not pale beloved snail but come and join  
the dance.  
Will you, won't you will you, won't you, will you  
join the dance?  
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, won't you  
join the dance?"

---

14

THE BURIAL OF SIR JOHN MOORE AT  
CORUNNA

Nor a drum was heard not a funeral note,  
As his corse to the rampart we hurried,  
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot  
O'er the grave where our hero we buried



We buried him darkly at dead of night,  
The soles with our bayonets turning,  
By the straggling moonbeams' misty light  
And the lantern dimly burning

No useless coffin enclosed his breast,  
Not in sheet or in shroud we wound him  
But he lay like a warrior taking his rest  
With his martial cloak around him

Low and short were the prayers we said,  
And we spoke not a word of sorrow,  
But we steadfastly gazed on the face that was dead  
And we bitterly thought of the morrow,

We thought, as we followed his narrow bier  
And smoothed down his lonely pillow,  
That the foe and the stranger would tread o'er his head  
And we far away on the hillow!

Tightly they'd talk of the spirit that's gone  
And our ~~his~~ cold Ghosts upbraid him—  
"The hell-reck, if they let him sleep on  
The grave where a Briton has laid him."

But half of our heavy task was done  
When the cock struck the hour for retiring,  
And we heard the distant and random gun  
That the foe was suddenly firing.

Slowly and sadly we laid him down,  
From the field of his fame fresh and gory,  
We carved not a line and we raised not a stone  
But we left him alone with his glory

---

## THE BUILDING OF THE SHIP

" BUILD me straight O worthy Master  
 Staunch and strong a good vessel  
 That shall laugh at all disaster  
 And with wave and windward I will be "

The merchant's word  
 Delighted the Master heard;  
 For his heart was in his work, and the heart  
 Giveth grace unto every Art.

A quiet smile played round his lips  
 As the eddies and dangles of the tide  
 Play round the bows of ships  
 That steadily sit on her ride  
 And with a voice that was full of cheer  
 He answered, " For long we will labour  
 A vessel as goodly, and strong and staunch,  
 As ever weathered a wintry sea "

And then with rarest skill and art  
 Perfect and finished in every part  
 A little model the Master wrought  
 Which should be to the larger ship  
 What the child is to the man,  
 Its counterpart in round and square  
 That with a hand more soft and sure  
 The greater labour might be brought  
 To answer to his inward thought

And as he laboured, his mind ran over  
 The various ships that were built of yore

And above them all, and strangest of all,  
 Towered the Great Harry, crank and tall,  
 Whose picture was hanging on the wall,  
 With bows and stern raised high in air  
 And barcones hanging here and there,  
 And signal lanterns and flags afloat  
 And eight round towers, like those that frown  
 From some old castle, looking down  
 Upon the drawbridge and the moor  
 And he said with a smile, "Our ship, I wis,  
 Shall be of another form than this"  
 It was of another form, indeed,  
 Built for freight and yet for speed  
 A beautiful and gallant craft,  
 Broad in the beam, that the stress of the blast,  
 Pressing down upon sail and mast  
 Might not the stern bows overwhelm  
 Broad in the beam, but sloping off  
 With graceful curve and slow degrees  
 That she might be docile to the helm  
 And that the currents of parted seas  
 Closing behind, with mighty force,  
 Might not and not impede her course  
 In the ship yard stood the Master,  
 With the model of the vessel,  
 That should laugh at all disaster,  
 And with wave and windward wrestle  
 Crossing many a rod of ground  
 Lay the timber piled around,  
 Timber of chestnut, and elm, and oak  
 And scattered here and there, with these,  
 The knarred and crooked cedar knees,  
 Brought from regions far away  
 Ah! what a wondrous thing it is



To note how many wheels of toil  
 One thought, one word, can set in motion  
 There's not a ship that sails the ocean,  
 But every climate, every soil,  
 Must bring its tribute, great or small  
 And help to build the wooden wall!

The sun was rising over the sea  
 And long the level shadows lay  
 As if they, too, the beams would be  
 Of some great, airy argosy,  
 Framed and launched at a single day.

That silent architect, the sun,  
 Had hewn and laid them every one  
 Ere the work of man was yet begun  
 Beside the Master when he spoke,  
 A youth, just an an'hor leaning  
 Listened to catch his lightest voice  
 Only the long waves, as they rode  
 In ripples on the pebbly beach  
 Interrupted the fair prospect.

Beautiful they were in sight,  
 The old man and the fiery youth  
 The old man makes a busy trade  
 Making a ship that sails the main  
 Was modelled over and over again  
 The fiery youth who was to be  
 The heir of his dexterity,  
 The heir of his house and his daughter's land,  
 When he had built and launched from land  
 What the elder head had planned

' Thus said he " will we build this ship,  
 I lay square the boards upon the ship  
 And lay well this plan of mine  
 Choose the timbers with greatest care  
 Of all that is unsound beware;  
 For only what is sound and strong  
 To this vessel shall belong  
 Let Mary and Georgia pine  
 Here together shall combine

A goodly frame and a goodly frame  
 And the Union be her name!  
 For the day that gives her to the sea  
 Shall give my daughter unto thee'

The Master's word  
 Ecstasied the young man heard  
 And as he turned his face aside,  
 With a look of joy and a thrill of pride  
 Standing before  
 Her father's door,  
 He saw the form of his promised bride  
 The sun shone on her golden hair  
 And her cheek was glowing fresh and fair  
 With the breath of morn and the soft sea air

Like a beautiful surge was she,  
 Still at rest on the sandy beach  
 Just beyond the billow's reach  
 Ah how skilful grows the hand  
 That begeth Love's command!  
 It is the heart and not the brain  
 That to the highest doth attain  
 And he who followeth Love's behest  
 Far excelleth all the rest!

Thus with the rising of the sun  
Was the noble task begun,  
And soon throughout the shipyard's bounds  
Were heard the intermingled sounds  
Of axes and of mallets, plied  
With vigorous arms on every side  
Plied so deftly and so well  
That ere the shadows of evening fell  
The keel of oak for a good ship  
Sawfed and hatted strong and strong  
Was lying ready, and stretched along  
The planks well placed upon the ship  
Happy, thrice happy every one  
Who sees his labour well begun,  
And not perplexed and multiplied  
By idly waiting for time and tide,  
And when the hot long day was o'er  
The young man at the Master's door  
Sat with the model of a good will  
And within the porch a little more  
Removed beyond the evening chill,  
The father sat, and told them tales  
Of wrecks in the great Southern gales  
Of pirates roasting the Spanish Men,  
And ships that never came back again  
The chance and change of a sailor's life  
Want and plenty, rest and strife  
His roving fancy like the wind  
That nothing can stay, and nothing can bind,  
And the magic charms of the green lands,  
With shadows of palms and laughing sands  
Where the tumbling surf,  
Over the coral reefs of Madagascar,  
Washes the feet of the swart Lascar,  
As he lies alone and asleep on the turf



And the trembling maiden told her breath  
 At the tales of that awful pitiless sea,  
 What all its terror and mystery  
 The dim, dark sea, so like unto Death  
 That divides and yet unites mankind,  
 And whenever the old man ceased a gleam  
 From the bowl of his pipe would awhile illumine  
 The silent group in the twilight gloom,  
 And thoughtful faces, as in a dream.

Day by day the vessel grew,  
 And timbers fashioned strong and true  
 Remained with perfect symmetry  
 The skeleton ship rose up to view.  
 And round the bows and along the side  
 The heavy hammers and adze's plied  
 All after many a week at length  
 Wonderful for form and strength,  
 Sublime in its enormous bulk  
 Came aloft the shadowy hulk.  
 And round it columns of smoke were wreathing  
 Rose from the boiling, bubbling, seething  
 Cauldron, that glowed,  
 And overflowed  
 With the black tar needed for the sheathing.

"And amid the clamours  
 Of clattering hammers,  
 He who listened heard them say and sing  
 The song of the Master and his men  
 Build me straight O worthy Master,  
 Staunch and strong, a good vessel,  
 That shall laugh at all disaster  
 And with wave and whirlwind wrestle

With oaken brace and copper band  
Lay the rudder on the sand  
That, like a thought should have control  
Over the movement of the wheel,  
And near it the anchor whose giant hand  
Would reach down and grapple with the land  
And immovable and fast  
Hold the great ship against the bellowing blast!  
And at the bows an image stood  
By a cunning artist carved in wood  
With robes of white that far behind  
Seemed to be fluttering in the wind  
It was not shaped in a classic mould  
Not like a Nymph or Goddess of old  
Or Naiad rising from the water  
But modelled from the Master's dream  
On many a dreary and misty night  
'Twill be seen by the rays of the signal light  
Speeding along through the fog and the rain,  
Like a ghost in its snow-white shroud  
The pilot of some phantom bark  
Guiding the vessel, in its flight  
By a path none other knows  
Behold, at last,  
Each tall and tapering mast  
Is swung into its place;  
Shrouds and stays  
Holding it firm and fast!

Long ago,  
In the desecrated tombs of Mount  
Whed upon mountain and plain  
Lay the snow,  
They fell, those lordly princes  
Those grand, majestic powers

'Mid shouts and cheers  
 The jaded steers,  
 Panting beneath the goad,  
 Dragged down the weary, winding road  
 Those captive kine so straggled and so  
 To be shorn of their streaming hair  
 And, naked and bare,  
 To feel the stress and the stream  
 Of the wind and the surging main  
 Whose roar  
 Would render them for evermore  
 Of mortal joys bereft: they should not see

And everywhere  
 The slender, graceful spars  
 Poise aloft in the air,  
 And at the mast-head,  
 White, blue, and red,  
 A flag unrolls her stripes and stars  
 Ah! when the wanderer lonely and forlorn  
 In foreign portons shall behold  
 That flag unrolled,  
 'Twill be as a friendly hand  
 Stretched out from his native land  
 Feeling his heart with memories sweet and fondness'

All is finished! now at length  
 Has come the bridal day  
 Of beauty and of strength.  
 To-day the vessel starts to launch!  
 With fleecy clouds the sky is blanch'd  
 And o'er the bay,  
 Slowly, in all his splendours dight  
 The great sun rises to behold the sight



There she stands,  
 With her foot upon the sand,  
 Decked with flags and streamers gay,  
 In honour of her marriage day  
 Her snow-white signals fluttering blending,  
 Like a fair lily in a velvet descending  
 Ready to be  
 The bride of the gray old sea

On the deck, another bride  
 Is standing by her lover's side  
 Shadows from the flags and streamers  
 Like the shadows cast by clouds  
 Broken by many a sunny flock  
 Fall around them on the deck

The prayer is said,  
 The service read,  
 The joyous bridegroom bows his head  
 And in tears the good old Master  
 Shakes the brown hand of his son  
 Kisses his daughter's glowing cheek  
 In silence for he cannot speak,  
 And ever faster  
 Down his own the tears begin to run  
 The worthy pastor—  
 The shepherd of that wandering flock  
 That has the ocean for its sea,  
 That has the vessel for its fold  
 Leaping ever from rock to rock—  
 Spoke, with accents mild and clear  
 Words of warning, words of cheer  
 But tedious to the bridegroom's ear  
 He knew the char-  
 Of the sailor's heart,

All its pressures and its griefs  
 All its shallows and rocky reefs  
 All those secret currents, that flow  
 With such resistless underow  
 And lift and drift, with terrible force  
 The will from its moorings and its course  
 Therefore to speak and thus to say  
 " Like unto ships far off at sea,  
 Outward or homeward bound, are we  
 Before, behind, and all around,  
 That is to say, as the Lorient's beard  
 Seeming at its distant rim to rise  
 And climb the crystal wall of the skies  
 And turn again to turn and sink  
 As it were could be from the outer brink  
 Ah! it is not the sea,  
 It is not the sea that sinks and staves  
 But ourselves  
 That rock and rise  
 With endless and uncessant motion  
 Now touching the very skies  
 Now sinking into the depths of ocean  
 As if our souls but pass and swing  
 Like the compass in its hazy ring  
 Ever level and ever true  
 To the toil and the task we have to do  
 We shall sail securely, and safely reach  
 The Fortunate Isles on whose shining beach  
 The sights we see and the sounds we hear,  
 Will be those of joy and not of fear."

Then the Master,  
 With a gesture of command  
 Waved his hand:

And at the word,  
 Loud and sudden there was heard  
 All round them and below,  
 The sound of hammers, blow on blow  
 Knocking away the shores and spurs  
 And see! she stirs!  
 She starts—she moves—she seems to feel  
 The thrill of life along her keel  
 And spurning with her foot the ground  
 With one exulting joyous bound  
 She leaps—to the ocean's arms!

Sail forth into the sea O ship!  
 Through wind and wave right onward steer!  
 The monitored eye, the trembling lip  
 Are not the sign of doubt or fear  
 Sail forth into the sea of life  
 O gentle, loving, trusting wife,  
 And safe from all adversity  
 Upon the bosom of that sea  
 Thy comings and thy goings be!  
 For gentleness and love and trust  
 Prevalent o'er angry wave and gust  
 And in the wreck of noble lives  
 Something immortal still survives!

Thou art—salute O Ship of State!  
 Salute O Union strong and great!  
 Humanity with all its fears,  
 With all the hopes of future years,  
 Is hanging breathless on thy fate!  
 We know what Master laid thy keel,  
 What Workmen wrought thy ribs of steel

Who made each mast and sail and rope  
 What aids and what handi-ers beid,  
 In what a forge and with what heat  
 Were scaped the anchors of thy hope?  
 Is not each sudden sound and shock  
 'Tis of the wave and not the rock  
 'Tis but the flapping of the sail,  
 And not a rent made by the gale?  
 In spite of rock and tempest's roar  
 In spite of false lights on the shore  
 Sail on, nor fear to breast the sea!  
 Our doubts are trifles if we view them  
 The fears of men are but as fears,  
 Our fate triumphant o'er our fears  
 Are all with thee—are all with thee!

## 16

## CONTENTMENT

*What I want but little there is here*

Little I ask, my wants are few  
 I only wish a hut of stone,  
 A rocky place where stone will do  
 That I may call my own;—  
 And close at hand is such a one  
 In yonder street that fronts the sun  
 Plain food is quite enough for me,  
 Three courses are as good as ten,  
 If Nature can subsist on three  
 Thank Heaven for three Amen!  
 I always thought cold victual nice,—  
 My choice would be vanilla-ice



I care not rich to be, or poor, —  
 Give me a mortgage loan, and there  
 Some good back-street — some note of hand,  
 Or trifling railroad share, —  
 I only ask that Fortune send  
 A little more than I shall spend

Honours are silly toys, I know,  
 And titles are but noisy hums,  
 I would, perhaps, be Plompo, —  
 But only near St. James;  
 I'm very sure I should not care  
 To fill our Gobernator's chair

Jewels are baubles; 'tis a sin  
 To care for such trifling things,  
 One good seed sown in a pair  
 Some, not so large, in rings, —  
 A ruby, and a pearl, or so,  
 Will do for me — I laugh at show

My dame should dress in cheap attire  
 (Good heavy silks are never dear —  
 I own perhaps I might desire  
 Some shawls of true Cashmere  
 Some narrow crapes of China silk  
 Like wrinkled skins on scalded milk

I would not have the horse I drive  
 So fast that folks must stop and stare  
 An easy gait — two forty five  
 Suits me; I do not care; —  
 Perhaps, for just a single spurt  
 Some seconds less would do no harm



Of picture I behold like to own  
 Titians and Raphaels three or four  
 I have so much their style and tone  
 One Turner, and no more,  
 A landscape,—foreground good and deep  
 The skyline painted with expert

Of books but few, some daily seen  
 For daily use, and found for wear,  
 The rest upon an upper floor,  
 Some little luxury there  
 Of red morocco gilded gleam  
 And well as such as remain

Busts and caskets—such things as these  
 Which others often show for pride  
 I value for their power to please  
 And selfish churls deride;  
 One Stradivarius, I confess,  
 Two metzschers I would fain possess

Worth's wasteful tricks I will not learn  
 Nor ape the gaudy upstart fact  
 Shall not carved titles serve my turn  
 But all must be of burl?  
 Give sleeping pomp its deathly shade  
 I ask but one recumbent chair

Thus humble let me live and die  
 Nor long for Midas' golden touch  
 If Heaven more generous gifts deny  
 I shall not miss them much  
 Too grateful for the blessing lent  
 Of simple tastes and mind content

MY FAMILIAR

AGAIN I hear that creaking step  
 He's rapping at the door!—  
 Too well I knew the bedding sound  
 That ushers in a bore  
 I do not tremble when I meet  
 The stoutest of my foes,  
 But Heaven defend me from the friend  
 Who comes—but never goes!

He drops into my easy chair  
 And asks about the news  
 He peers into my manuscript  
 And gives his candid views  
 He tells me where he takes the tea  
 And where he's forced to grove,  
 He takes the strangest liberties  
 But never takes his leave!

He reads my daily paper to—get  
 Before I've seen a word,  
 He scans the lyric that I write  
 And thinks it quite absurd,  
 He calmly smokes my best—g—  
 And coolly asks for more;  
 He opens everything he sees  
 Except the entry door!

He tattles about the fragile youth  
 And tells me of the pains  
 He suffers from a score of ills  
 Of which he never complains.

And now I struggled once with Death,  
 To keep the fiend at bay;  
 On heroes like those away he goes—  
 But never goes away!

He tells me of the caping words  
 Some shallow critic wrote;  
 And every precious paragraph  
 Familiarly can quote;  
 He thinks the writer did no wrong,  
 He'd like to run him through;  
 He says a thousand pleasant things—  
 But never says, "Adieu!"

When ever he comes that dreaded man  
 Disguise it as I may,  
 I know that, like an autumn rain,  
 He'll last throughout the day  
 In vain I speak of urgent tasks,  
 In vain I scowl and pout;  
 A frown is no extinguisher—  
 It does not put him out!

I mean to take the knocker off,  
 Put crepe upon the door,  
 Or hint to John that I am gone  
 To stay a month or more,  
 I do not tremble when I meet  
 The stoutest of my foes,  
 But Heaven defend me from the friend  
 Who never never goes!



## LITTLE JESUS

LITTLE Jesus, wast Thou shy  
 Once, and just so small as I?  
 And what did it feel like to be  
 Out of Heaven and just like me?  
 Didst Thou sometimes wonder at them  
 And ask where all the angels were?  
 I should think that I would cry  
 For my house all made of sky,  
 I would look about the air,  
 And wonder where my angels were,  
 And at waking 'twould distress me—  
 Not an angel there to greet me?  
 Hadst Thou ever any toys,  
 Like us little girls and boys?  
 And didst Thou play in Heaven with all  
 The angels that were not too tall  
 With stars for marbles? Did the things  
 Play 'Can you see me?' from their tiny wings?  
 And did Thy Mother let Her spoils  
 Thy robes, with playing on our souls  
 How nice to have them always new  
 In Heaven, because 'twas quite clean blue?

Didst Thou kneel at night to pray  
 And didst Thou join Thy hands, O how  
 And did they tire sometimes being young  
 And make the prayer seem very long?  
 And didst Thou like it best that we  
 Should join our hands to pray to Thee?  
 I used to think, before I knew  
 The prayer that said 'Amen' we do

And didst Thou ever in the garden stand  
 Kiss Thy mother and her mother's hand?  
 And did Thy Mother at the night  
 Kiss Thee, and feel her mother's heart?  
 And didst Thou feel quite good indeed  
 Kneeling and swayed by prayer's sweet lead?

Thou canst not have forgotten all  
 That it feels like to be small:  
 And then I know that Thou hast power  
 To follow Thy father's way—  
 When Thou wast so little, say,  
 Canst Thou walk Thy father's way?  
 So, a little Child, come down  
 And be my tongue like Thy own  
 Take me by the hand and walk,  
 And listen to my baby-talk  
 To Thy Father show my prayer  
 (He will not think it so far)  
 And say to Father I Thy Son  
 Bring the prayer of a little one!

And He will say that children's tongue  
 Has not failed since Thou wast young!

## 19

## ON THE OTHER SIDE

What a long road it is the waiting days!  
 What a long day it is!  
 What a long road it is in these strange ways  
 To find the one we love!

Oh, you cry at the door as I pass here,

Death's door that lies between?

Oh, you plead in vain for me, my dear,

As you stand by my side unseen?

What will comfort your difficult days

That were hard to understand

When I who knew you three or four dead days,

Can give you no helping hand

What I who could you no longer speak

Though your ghost still talks to me

Can give no help though my heart should break

At the thought of your agony

How many strangers and how many care

Are round me now and now

I think of you as with my hand in mine

What will my darling do?

## LEISURE

WHAT is this life if, full of care,

We have no time to stand and stare

No time to stand beneath the eaves

And see how long the sheep or cows

No time to see when woods we pass

Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass

No time to see when broad daylight

Strews full of stars, like skies at night

No time to turn at Beauty's ease

And watch her feet how they can dance





By Tupman's meadow  
They did their mile,  
Tee-to-tum  
On a three-barred stile  
To go straight through Whupham,  
Downhill to Week,  
Footing it lightsome,  
But not too quick,  
Up fields to Watchet,  
And on through Wye,  
Till seven fine churches  
They'd seen skip by—  
Seven fine churches,  
And five old mills,  
Farms in the valley,  
And sheep on the hills;  
Old Man's Acre  
And Dead Man's Pool  
All left behind,  
As they danced to the h Wool,  
And Wool gone by,  
Like tops that seem  
To spin in sleep  
They danced in dream:  
Withy—Wellover—  
Wassop—Wo—  
Like an old clock  
Their heels did go.  
•A league and a league  
And a league they went,  
And not one weary,  
And not one spent.

And lo, and behold!

Past Willow-cum-Lelgh

Stretched with its waters

The great green sea

Says Farmer Bates,

' I puffs and I blows,

What's under the water,

' Why, no man knows!'

Says Farmer Giles,

' My wind comes weak,

And a good man drowned

Is far to seek.'

But Farmer Turvey,

On twirling toes

Up's with his gaiters,

And in he goes:

Down where the mermaids

Pluck and play

On their twangling harps

In a sea-green day;

Down where the mermaids,

Finned and fair,

Sleek with their combs

Their yellow hair

Bates and Giles—

On the shingle sat,

Gazing at Turvey's

Floating hut.

But never a ripple

Nor bubble told

Where he was supping

Off plates of gold.

Never an echo  
     Rilled through the sea  
 Of the feasting and dancing  
     And minstrelsy  
 They called—called—called  
     Came no reply  
 Nought but the ripples  
     Sandy sigh  
 Then glum and silent  
     They sat instead,  
 Vainly brooding  
     On home and bed  
 Till both together  
     Stood up and said—  
 ' 'Tis known not, dreamt not,  
     Where you be,  
 Turvey, unless  
     In the deep blue sea,  
 But axcusing silver—  
     And it comes most willing—  
 Here's us two paying  
     Our forty shilling,  
 For it's sartin sure, Turvey,  
     Safe and sound,  
 You danc'd us square Turvey  
     Off the ground! '

## TIME YOU OLD GIPSY MAN

TIME, you old gipsy man,  
     Will you not stay,  
 Put up your caravan  
     Just for one day?

All things I'll give you  
Will you be my guest,  
Bells for your jennet  
Of silver the best,  
Goldsmiths shall beat you  
A great golden ring,  
Peacocks shall bow to you,  
Little boys sing,  
Oh, and sweet girls will  
Festoon you with may,  
Time, you old gipsy,  
Why hasten away?

Last week in Babylon,  
Last night in Rome,  
Morning, and in the crush  
Under Paul's dome;  
Under Paul's dial  
You tighten your rein—  
Only a moment,  
And off once again;  
Off to some city  
Now blind in the womb,  
Off to another  
Ere that's in the tomb.

Time, you old gipsy man,  
Will you not stay,  
Put up your caravan  
Just for one day?



## THE LIGHTHOUSE

Just as I watched as none the fog had lifted,  
 And we could see the flashing of our light,  
 And once more the reef beyond the Head  
 Over which six days and nights we must have drifted  
 Until some odd time to night had drifted  
 And day and night were not and could not be.

But on the seventh, mad as the wind and shifted  
 And I was glad to turn into bed  
 Thankful to be in the room the light was  
 But it was as if I had stepped in a dream  
 With nothing but the floor beneath my feet  
 The wind howled and ships at sea  
 You thought it was a day  
 I lay awake and seemed to feel  
 The water on my eyes still there  
 And still the horn in my ear  
 Sang through my head, till gradually  
 Through night's strange stillness  
**Sweet sleep began to steal,**  
 Sleep that was thick and deep and the fog

For to I know I might have  
 A moment—or eternity,  
 When, startled by a crash,  
 I waked to find I'd leapt  
 Upright on the floor;  
 And stood there listening to the smash  
 Of falling glass and then a thud  
 Of something heavy tumbling  
 Into the next room...  
**A pad of naked feet...**

A moan a sound of stumbling ..  
 A never that and then no more  
 And I stood shivering in the gloom,  
 With creeping flesh and tingling blood,  
 Until I gave myself a shake  
 To bring my wits more wide awake,  
 And I a lantern and flung wide the door  
 Half dazed and dazzled by the light  
 At first it seemed I'd only find  
 A broken pane a flapping blind,  
 But when I raised the lantern o'er my head  
 I saw a naked lay upon the bed  
 With a white head and shuddered on the folded sheet  
 And on his face before my feet  
 A face that lay as if quite dead,  
 Though on his broken knuckles blood was red,  
 And my wits awaked at the sight  
 I set the lantern down and took the child  
 Who looked at me with piteous eyes and wild  
 And clasped his chill wet body 'til it glowed,  
 And, forcing spite 'twixt his battering teeth  
 I tucked him snugly in beneath  
 The blankets and soon left him warmly stowed  
 And stopped to tend the man who lay  
 Still senseless on the floor  
 I turned him off his face  
 And laid him on the other bed,  
 And washed and staunch'd his wound,  
 And yet, for all that I could do  
 I could not bring him to,  
 Or see a trace  
 Of the returning to that heavy head

It seemed he'd swooned  
 When through the window he'd made way,

Just having strength to lay  
The boy in safety—Still as death  
He lay without a breath;  
And seeing I could do no more  
To help him in the fight for life  
I turned eager to tend the lad,  
And as I looked on him was glad  
To find him sleeping quietly  
So, fetching fuel, I lit a fire  
And quickly had as big a blaze  
As any housewife could desire  
Then, twixt the beds I set a chair,  
That I might watch until they stirred  
And as I saw them lying there  
The sleeping boy and him who lay  
In that strange slumber—twas plain  
That they were son and father—now  
I'd time to look and wonder how  
In such a desperate plight,  
Without a stitch or rag,  
They'd faced a long, frosty night  
And, as I wondered drowsily,  
It seemed still queerer and more queer  
For round the Head the rocks are sheer  
With scarce a foothold for a hand,  
And it seemed quite beyond belief  
That any wrecked upon that reef  
Could swim ashore—and scale the crag  
By daylight—let alone by night

But they were by the sea  
Know naught's too wonderful to be,  
And as I sat and heard  
The quiet breathing of the child  
Great weariness came over me,

And in a kind of daze  
 I watched the blaze  
 With nodding head,  
 And must have slept, for presently  
 I found the man was sitting up in bed,  
 And talking to himself with wide unseeing eyes  
 At first I hardly made out what he said  
 But soon his voice, so hoarse and wild,  
 Grew calm, and, straining I could hear  
 The broken words that came with many sighs

Yes, lad, she's going but there's naught to fear,  
 For I can swim and tow you in the boat  
 Come, let's join hands together and leap aboard  
 Ay, son, it's dark and cold but you have felt  
 The cold and dark before..  
 And you should scorn. . .  
 And we must be near shore..  
 For hark, the horn!  
 Think of your mother and your home and leap  
 See thanks of us, lad waking or asleep  
 You would not leave her, only?  
 Nay then go!  
 Well done, lad!.....Nay! I'm here.....  
 Ay, son, it's cold, but you're too big to fear  
 Now then you're snug I've got you safe in tow  
 The worst is over and we've only  
 To make for land we've naught to do but steer..  
 But steer...but steer..

He paused and sank down in the bed, quite done,  
 And a moment stent while his son  
 Still slumbered in the other bed,  
 And on his quiet face the firelight shone  
 Then once again the father raised his head

And rambled on—

" Say, lad, what cheer?

I thought you'd dropt asleep—but you're all right

We'll rest a moment—I'm quite out of breath.

It's further than Nay-son's there's naught to fear

The land must be quite near

The horn is loud enough!

Only your father's cut of puff

He's getting fat and lazy—is your dad

Ay, lad,

It's cold

But you're too old

To cry for cold

Now...keep...tight hold

And we'll be off again

I've got my breath..."

He sank once more as still as death

With hands that clutched the counter—

But still the boy was sleeping quietly

And then the father sat up suddenly

And cried—" See! See!

The land! The land!

It's near—I touch it with my hand

And now—O God! he moaned

Small wonder when he saw what lay before—

The black unbroken crags so grim and high

That must have seemed to him to soar

Sheer from the sea's edge to the sky

But soon he plucked up heart once more

" We're safe, lad—safe ashore."

A narrow ledge—but land, firm and

We'll soon be high and dry

Nay-son—we can't stay here



The waves would have us back  
 Or we should pass on to the end  
 Come, lad, 'tween's no light to fear  
 You must be brave and hold,  
 Perhaps we'll strike a track.  
 Ay, son, it's steep and black  
 And slippy to the hold;  
 But we must climb, for the mist is gone  
 The stars are shining clear  
 Hark, son, your mother's at the top  
 And you'll be up in time. See that star  
 The brightest star that ever shone,  
 That's back of us, but that's not her own.  
 And I know that you'll be brave and true  
 Come, lad, we may not stop  
 Or else the cold...  
 Give me your hand  
 Your foot there now, just room to stand  
 It cannot be so far  
 We'd soon be up, this wave should make us a stair  
 Thank God it's not a storm  
 Or we could scarce climb. Your foot here firm  
 Nay, lad! You must not squirm  
 Come, to a man you shall not fail  
 I'll hold you tight.  
 There now you're my own son after all!  
 Your mother, lad  
 Her star turns bright  
 And we're already half-way up the height  
 Your mother will be glad  
 Ay, she'll be glad to hear  
 Of her brave boy who had no fear  
  
 Your foot—your hand—twas but a bud  
 You started out of bed

'Twould think it queer  
To wake up suddenly and see your head;  
And when you stirred.....  
Nay! steady, lad!  
Or you will send your dad.....  
Your hand...your foot...We'll rest upon this ledge.....  
Why, son, we're at the top! I feel the edge  
And grass—soft dewy grass!  
Let go one moment and I'll draw you up.....  
Now, lad!.....Thank God that's past!  
And you are safe at last—  
You're safe, you're safe.....and now my precious lass  
Will see her son, her little son, again.

I never thought to reach the top to-night.  
God! What a height!  
Nay, but you must not look: 'twould turn your head:  
And we must not stand shivering here.....  
And see!—a flashing light.....  
It's sweeping towards us, and now you stand bright...  
Ah, your poor bleeding hands and feet!  
My little son, my sweet!  
'There's nothing more to fear.  
A lighthouse, lad! And we must make for it.  
You're tired; I'll carry you a bit.  
Nay, son, 'twill warm me up.....  
And there will be a fire and bed,  
And even perhaps a cup  
Of something hot to drink,  
And something good to eat.  
And think, son, only think—  
Your home.....and mother.....once again!"

Once more the weary head  
Sank back upon the bed;

And for a while he hardly stirred,  
But only muttered now and then  
A broken word,  
As though to cheer  
His son who slept so quietly  
At the other side of me.  
And then my blood ran cold to hear  
A sudden cry of fear:  
" My son! My son!  
Ah God, he's done!  
I thought I'd laid him on the bed.....  
I've laid him on white mist instead.....  
He's fallen sheer....."

Then I sprang up and cried: " Your son is here!"  
And taking up the sleeping boy  
I bore him to his father's arms,  
And as he nestled to his breast  
Kind life came back to those wild eyes  
And filled them with deep joy,  
And free of all alarms  
The son and father lay  
Together in sweet rest,  
While through the window stole the strange clear  
light of day.

## 24

## CRADLE-SONG

FROM groves of spice,  
O'er fields of rice,  
Athwart the lotus-stream,  
I bring for you,  
Aglint with dew  
A little lovely dream.



Sweet, shut your eyes,  
The wild fire-flies  
Dance through the fairy *neem*;  
From the poppy-hole  
For you I stole  
A little lovely dream.

Dear eyes, good-night,  
In golden light  
The stars around you gleam;  
On you I press  
With soft caress  
A little lovely dream.

---

25

THE CAROL OF THE POOR CHILDREN

We are the poor children, come out to see the sights  
On this day of all days, on this night of nights;  
The stars in merry parties are dancing in the sky,  
A fine star, a new star, is shining on high!

We are the poor children, our lips are frosty blue,  
We cannot sing our carol as well as rich folk do;  
Our bellies are so empty we have no singing voice,  
But this night of all nights good children must rejoice.

We do rejoice, we do rejoice, as hard as we can try,  
A fine star, a new star is shining in the sky!  
And while we sing our carol, we think of the delight  
The happy kings and shepherds make in Bethlehem  
to-night.

Are we naked, mother, and are we starving-poor—  
Oh, see what gifts the kings have brought outside  
the stable-door;

Are we cold, mother, the ass will give his hay  
 To make the manger warm and keep the cruel winds  
away.

We are the poor children, but not so poor who sing  
 Our carol without voiceless hearts to greet the  
new-born King.

On this night of all nights, when in the frosty sky  
 A new star, a kind star is shining on high!

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## 26

## THE SEND-OFF

Down the close, darkening lanes they sang their way  
 To the siding-shed,  
 And lined the train with faces grimly gay.  
 Their breasts were stuck all white with wreath and  
spray

As men's are, dead.

Dull porters watched them, and a casual tramp  
 Stood staring hard,  
 Sorry to miss them from the upland camp.  
 Then, unmoved, signals nodded, and a lamp  
 Winked to the guard.

So secretly, like wrongs hushed-up, they went,  
 They were not ours:  
 We never heard to which front these were sent.  
 Nor there if they yet mock what women meant  
 Who gave them flowers.

Shall they return to beatings of great bells  
 In wild train-loads?

A few, a few, too few for drums and yells,  
 May creep back, silent, to village wells  
 Up half-known roads.

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